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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

Report of the Secretary-General**

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** The late submission of the report is due to the recently changed situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 55/169 of 14 December 2000, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to it at its fifty-sixth session on the implementation of the resolution. The report covers developments from 1 July 2000 to 15 July 2001.

2. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia comprises the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro. Owing to the fact that the province of Kosovo is under the interim administration of the United Nations, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), the situation there is covered in separate paragraphs of the report.

II. Review of major humanitarian developments

3. Developments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia present new opportunities to address the underlying causes of humanitarian needs. United Nations agencies have responded by helping to build the capacity of the Government to formulate and implement policies aimed at durable solutions and to meet the basic needs of the resident, refugee and internally displaced populations.

4. The scale of the problems inherited by the Government is such that the process of reform and recovery will likely be difficult and take some time to show results. The humanitarian context includes one of the largest populations of refugees and displaced persons in Europe, widespread poverty and inadequate basic services. Nevertheless, the number of people requiring humanitarian assistance has begun to decline and the prospect of further progress towards durable solutions and development looks positive.

5. During the reporting period the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the authorities jointly conducted registration exercises for both the refugee and internally displaced populations (see para. 62 for details). Humanitarian agencies, led by UNHCR, assist those groups by ensuring that their basic needs are met, while promoting durable solutions.

6. Improving bilateral relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with Croatia, may lead to increased refugee returns to those countries. However, conditions for large-scale returns of displaced persons to Kosovo do not yet exist. The Framework for Return, drawn up in January 2001, identified potential areas for return within Kosovo and described steps to be taken to create conditions conducive to return. UNHCR offices throughout the country started implementing activities under the Framework, including visits by internally displaced persons to possible return locations in the province.

7. The severe decline in the economy and basic services is such that segments of the resident population, in addition to displaced persons and refugees, are identified as eligible for international humanitarian assistance. The World Food Programme (WFP) provides food aid to selected groups of social welfare beneficiaries (principally those in institutional care) and pensioners whose incomes fall below the subsistence threshold. The World Health Organization (WHO) focuses on maintaining adequate quality and availability of basic health services, while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) provides urgent support in education as well as woman and child-focused interventions in the health and social welfare sectors. UNHCR, UNICEF and several non-governmental organizations implemented winter programmes, including the distribution of heating fuel, clothing, supplementary food and materials to insulate shelters.

8. In response to the volatile situation in southern Serbia, the United Nations system, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the international community in general have focused their attention and resources on that area. Following a United Nations inter-agency assessment mission in February 2001, a United Nations office was established in the area. Approximately 17,000 ethnic Albanians left the ground safety zone in southern Serbia for Kosovo, of whom some 4,000 have so far returned. In partnership with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, UNHCR is assisting returns. Southern Serbia is now also hosting approximately 8,000 refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The potential for an escalated refugee influx is serious. UNHCR has been coordinating inter-agency preparedness measures.

9. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a whole, a variety of assessments were undertaken to sharpen

beneficiary identification and inform programme design and strategy, in particular in view of the new opportunities to work towards durable solutions and development. In addition to the registration of refugees and internally displaced persons by UNHCR, other assessments have been undertaken, including of food security by WFP and UNHCR; crop production by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); baseline health data by WHO and UNICEF; water and sanitation and energy by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; municipal-level surveys by UNICEF; and poverty by WFP. Under the auspices of the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs led a number of inter-agency assessments to identify immediate practical priorities, including a review of urgent needs by sector and a survey of priorities at the municipal level. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also published regular early warning and humanitarian risk analysis reports, respectively. UNDP also undertook a survey of national non-governmental organizations as part of its civil society capacity-building programme.

10. In August 2000, the Humanitarian Coordinator for Kosovo, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, requested United Nations entities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to review and identify gaps in humanitarian assistance. The results of the review highlighted the need to build the capacity of local staff, institutions and government authorities; to involve local partners and institutions in decision-making from the outset; to mainstream human rights and gender in all activities; and to promote peace and inter-ethnic reconciliation. The analysis provided a basis for the Common Humanitarian Action Plan and the projects included in the 2001 consolidated appeal.

11. The conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia resulted in the arrival since March 2001 of over 80,000 ethnic Albanian refugees, mainly women and children, in Kosovo. Most of them have been accommodated with host families. United Nations agencies and international aid organizations, together with other local partners, provided the refugees with humanitarian assistance and helped the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) to integrate them into local services. However, the refugees have put a strain on those services and on the host families. An inter-agency emergency preparedness plan, to cater for up to 200,000 refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in Kosovo, was developed and is updated regularly. In early July 2001, the inter-agency consolidated appeal for South-Eastern Europe was revised to request funds for projects in the emergency preparedness plan. At the beginning of July, people began to return spontaneously to the Skopje area. At the beginning of September, the total number of returnees reached 49,000 (mountain crossings not included), while over 32,000 persons remained displaced in Kosovo.

III. Review of socio-economic developments

12. Despite recent trends indicating that the policies of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are halting economic decline, a recent World Bank report indicates the extent of degradation over the past 10 years. Gross domestic product (GDP) in the country in 2000 was less than half the 1989 level. Price levels in Serbia rose by 115 per cent in 2000, while in Montenegro the inflation rate was 25 per cent, despite use of the deutsche mark (DM). Real wages, measured against a constant poverty benchmark, lost 60 per cent of their value between 1991 and 2000.

13. The quality and capacity of public services, including health, education and social welfare, have been undermined during the past decade by economic decline, lack of reform and investment, economic sanctions and the conflicts that accompanied the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The refugee and internally displaced populations further stretch the basic services. Real per capita health spending in Serbia fell from $240 in 1989 to approximately $59 at present. The decline in GDP through the 1990s has also affected trends in education expenditures. While the share of GDP budgeted for education remained constant, at around 4 per cent, the actual expenditure on education in 1998 was 27.2 per cent lower than in 1990.

14. The social welfare system is also seriously overstretched. In some cases allowances are insufficient to meet subsistence needs and living conditions in social institutions are poor because of

irregular maintenance. The number of people seeking social welfare assistance is likely to grow in the coming year as a result of government reforms that will probably result in higher unemployment and higher prices for previously subsidized goods and services (including basic foods and electricity). The Government's reform programme, which also includes the health, education and social welfare institutions, may cause disruptions to service delivery in the coming period.

15. Agriculture continued its decline over the past year, exacerbated by the severe drought that followed the flooding in early 2000. The 2000 wheat harvest yielded approximately 2.2 million tons, compared with 4.1 million tons in 1991, putting production below national consumption needs. Maize production dropped from 7.8 million tons to 3.0 million tons over the same period. The breakdown of the state farm sector has deprived private farmers of traditional support in the supply of inputs and guaranteed outlets for produce. Shortages of fuel and fertilizer have only been mitigated in part by donations from the international community and, with 70 per cent of the rural population living on or near the poverty line, purchasing power to procure farm inputs and commute production shortages is limited. Livestock production, a significant activity of the majority of small-scale farmers, has fallen by more than 25 per cent, increasing the vulnerability of the sector to food insecurity. The mild 2000/01 winter, followed by prolonged spring rains, has improved the prospect of increased cereal and fodder yields for the 2001 harvest.

16. In Kosovo, major improvements have been made in the provision of basic public services and utilities, while homes for 50,000 families have been reconstructed. However, owing to the lack of security, there was little progress among the minority populations.

17. In August 2000, the Department of Health and Social Welfare initiated a social assistance scheme. By July 2001, approximately 54,000 families were receiving payments of up to DM 120 per month under the scheme.

18. Unemployment is estimated at 53 per cent for women and 48 per cent for men in Kosovo as a whole, but rates are even higher among minority populations. In 1998, agriculture, forestry and agribusiness accounted for 60 per cent of employment and played a key role in food security at the household level. Significant donor support since then has reactivated the rural economy. Despite this, access to farm inputs remains limited while crop and livestock yields are low. Much of the service economy revolves around the presence of a large number of expatriates and is therefore not sustainable.

IV. Review of human rights developments

19. Following the election of new Governments in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia there has been a major improvement in the human rights situation. Senior government officials in key ministries are committed to a programme of reform in those public institutions which were worst affected by the abuse and neglect of the former regime. Early and successful reform of state institutions such as the police, judiciary and penal institutions will have an important impact on the observance of human rights. However, the process of reform requires prompt and substantial support from the international community if the positive first steps are to be consolidated to create durable democratic institutions governed by the rule of law.

20. In Serbia, widespread abuses such as arbitrary detention and persecution of civilians, including human rights activists and ethnic minorities, ended with the election of the new Governments, which have taken a number of important steps to address the systematic human rights abuses of the former regime. Those steps include the passing and implementation of an Amnesty Act, under which a large number of earlier convicted Kosovo Albanians were released and returned to Kosovo (though some 200 remain detained in Serbian prisons); investigations into the fate of some 3,300 persons missing from the time of the Kosovo conflict; criminal investigations into alleged human rights abuses by members of the police, armed forces and paramilitaries; the arrest and transfer to the International Tribunal in The Hague of the former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, under a warrant alleging the commission of crimes against humanity; and efforts to find durable solutions for more than 180,000 Serbs displaced from Kosovo as a result of human rights abuses and persecution committed by ethnic Albanians in Kosovo between 1999 and 2001. The authorities have also successfully

ended an ethnic Albanian insurgency in southern Serbia with a minimum of bloodshed and a commitment to address long-standing discrimination against ethnic Albanians in the area.

21. In Montenegro, political uncertainty regarding the status of the Republic within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has had a negative impact on the speed of institutional reform. Nonetheless, Montenegro has avoided large-scale human rights abuses and there are a number of capacity-building initiatives in the area of human rights that are supported by international and regional institutions. These include education, promotion of non-governmental organizations and civil society, support for minority rights and efforts to combat human trafficking, in particular of women.

22. In May 2001, UNMIK unveiled its Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government and province-wide elections are scheduled for November 2001. UNMIK continues to work to establish security and order and to build local government institutions. Legislation has been passed that addresses, inter alia, issues of legal representation, detention, establishing an impartial judiciary, preventing irregular border crossings and combating terrorism. Despite the best efforts of UNMIK and KFOR, ethnic-related violence and discrimination continue, primarily against the remaining ethnic Serb population, and in this climate of hostility, the prospects for return of displaced persons and harmonious inter-ethnic relations remain bleak.

23. Nonetheless, in January 2001, the Joint Committee on Returns (comprising UNMIK, UNHCR, the Kosovo Force (KFOR), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Serb representatives) developed a Framework for Return, which identifies and addresses the obstacles to a safe and sustainable return of displaced Serbs to their homes in Kosovo. A similar process is being developed for Ashkalia, Egyptian and Roma returns. Furthermore, KFOR has taken more vigorous steps to prevent the border areas with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the boundary with southern Serbia from being used by armed ethnic Albanian extremists. Regrettably, some actions relating to the arrest and detention of suspected armed elements do not provide adequate legal and human rights safeguards.

24. The return to Kosovo of ethnic Albanian prisoners from Serbia was viewed as a positive development, although a number of persons still have to be released. On the other hand, the unresolved and sensitive issue of missing persons remains an obstacle to better relations between ethnic communities.

25. On advice from UNHCR, UNMIK is replacing the Ad Hoc Task Force on Minorities, chaired by UNHCR, with a high-level Advisory Board on Minorities, to be chaired by the Principal Deputy to my Special Representative. The Board will advise my Special Representative on minority concerns and policies.

26. A report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on gender issues in the province found the need for greatly increased awareness of human rights and of women's rights in particular. Additionally, the study noted the need for greater local involvement and gender awareness in the formulation of all policies, programmes and regulations. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) is involved in a programme of engendering governance and leadership and mainstreaming gender awareness in UNMIK and Kosovo society.

V. Assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners

A. Coordination arrangements

27. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia[1] was appointed in August 1999 and, with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provides overall coordination, including regular agency consultations in both Belgrade and Podgorica. Operational agencies lead sectoral coordination. A United Nations resident coordinator post has also been created, currently held ad interim by the Humanitarian Coordinator.

28. Since July 2000, a Humanitarian Coordinator for Kosovo, supported by a team from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has had responsibility for coordinating humanitarian activities in the province. Close cooperation continues between the various United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, donors and UNMIK to ensure that vulnerable populations are provided with adequate and timely assistance. The Humanitarian Community Information Centre, supported by the Office for the

Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other bodies, continues to support the Humanitarian Coordinator through needs assessments, contingency planning and information-sharing and management.

B. Winterization efforts

29. In Serbia and Montenegro, a winter energy crisis was averted through significant imports of energy and other resources, domestic measures, favourable weather patterns and humanitarian assistance. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs coordinated the humanitarian effort, providing analysis and linking donors, implementing agencies and domestic authorities in the energy sector. The UNHCR winter programme included the delivery of 9,782 tons of coal and 5,621 tons of heating oil to 43,535 refugees and internally displaced persons. Various non-food items were delivered to approximately 40,000 beneficiaries in private accommodation, collective centres and local settlements.

30. Assistance from UNICEF included the repair of heating systems in children's institutions and the provision of heating fuel, coal and stoves to primary and secondary schools and maternity units. In addition, UNICEF provided generators for life-saving equipment, such as incubators and warmers for premature and low-birth babies at health centres, in order to help them overcome frequent electrical power cuts.

31. UNDP implemented humanitarian projects in several municipalities in Serbia targeting refugees and displaced persons in collective centres as well as host families. Those projects included the provision of basic materials and tools for self-help winterization repairs, distribution of non-food items and the development of vegetable gardens and rearing of small animals around collective centres.

32. WHO conducted an influenza vaccination campaign covering persons over 65 years of age and patients whose chronic disease status placed them at high risk of complications from influenza.

33. In Kosovo, a risk analysis carried out by the Humanitarian Community Information Centre revealed 42,000 vulnerable families requiring fuel for heating and cooking and some 5,000 families in need of emergency shelter. Despite the late arrival of funds, the collective efforts of United Nations agencies, UNMIK, non-governmental organizations, KFOR and donors, coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, succeeded in meeting those needs. A benchmark in the preparedness exercise was the transfer of responsibility for winter contingency planning from international aid organizations to UNMIK municipal structures.

C. Food aid

34. WFP is the main agency responsible for providing food aid to vulnerable groups and, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental organizations, assists refugees, internally displaced persons and social cases.

35. WFP food aid targeted 212,000 vulnerable refugees in Serbia and 6,000 in Montenegro from a collective total of 400,000 in both Republics. In addition, UNHCR provided fresh food to collective centres. Vegetable gardens and poultry-raising projects continued to benefit some 10,524 refugees and internally displaced persons in 122 collective centres throughout Serbia. ICRC provided food aid to some 116,000 internally displaced persons in Serbia, while in Montenegro WFP coordinated bulk food assistance to the internally displaced (an average of 13,000 beneficiaries during the latter half of 2001).

36. The bulk of food aid is targeted at socially vulnerable groups who are unable to meet their minimum food requirements, including elderly pensioners, single parent households, the handicapped and chronically ill and those in social institutions. WFP provides basic food rations to 380,000 vulnerable social cases in Serbia and to 25,000 in Montenegro. In addition, ICRC assists 72,000 persons through its soup kitchens. Responsibility for the soup kitchens will be handed over to the Yugoslav Red Cross on 1 July 2001.

37. Between July 2000 and July 2001, WFP provided 85,000 tons of food aid in Serbia (7,800 tons in Montenegro). Some 14,000 tons, representing 16 per cent of the total food provided, was purchased in Serbia. For refugee caseloads, the main implementing partner is the Yugoslav Red Cross. For social cases and pensioners, a network of five major international non-governmental organizations is responsible for the management, distribution and monitoring of food aid supplied by WFP. Food distributed through international non-governmental organizations

constitutes 66 per cent of the total food aid provided in Serbia.

38. During the period under review, WFP took concrete steps to phase down food aid to Serbia in a structured and focused manner. Measures included the wide-scale introduction of international non-governmental organizations as implementing partners, the introduction of local committee meetings to bring local knowledge to bear on the targeting process and the integration of food aid within the Ministry of Social Welfare's social policy reform matrix. WFP, UNHCR and ICRC conducted two joint food aid needs assessment missions to assure that food aid was being programmed in accordance with the needs of the most vulnerable populations. Improved vulnerability targeting will also be introduced in July 2001, focusing on the household vulnerability and poverty levels, rather than the beneficiary classification.

39. In Kosovo, the UNMIK Department of Health and Social Welfare, together with WFP and its implementing partners, supported the transition of emergency food aid to the centres for social work of the Department, as a complement to the cash-based social assistance scheme. The transition, completed in March 2001, was formalized through an operating framework agreement, placing special emphasis on unhindered access to and non-discriminatory treatment of minority groups and the most vulnerable. WFP and UNHCR designed a food safety net to benefit the 100,000 vulnerable persons, including 20,000 members of minority groups, who did not meet the scheme's criteria. International agencies are building the capacity of local communities to assume responsibility for the food safety net by the end of winter 2001/02.

D. Shelter

40. UNHCR provided financial support to the Serbian and Montenegrin Refugee Commissioners for the running costs of collective centres. Some 43,000 refugees and internally displaced live in collective accommodation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (excluding Kosovo). Small-scale repairs to collective centres were carried out through implementing partner agreements.

41. In Kosovo, UNMIK has indicated that 2001 will be the last year for large-scale housing reconstruction assistance. The target for 2001 is 8,000 houses, compared with 28,000 completed in the previous year. Priority is given to socially vulnerable groups, including beneficiaries of last year's emergency shelter schemes, female-headed households, minorities without freedom of movement, residents of temporary community shelters, returning refugees and families meeting the vulnerability criteria of the Department of Health and Social Welfare. UNMIK is assessing the number of vulnerable families requiring reconstruction assistance. UNMIK continues to manage temporary community shelters for Kosovo Albanians with no alternative accommodation, while UNHCR is negotiating the transfer of community shelters for minority populations from UNHCR to UNMIK.

E. Health

42. WHO coordinates health-related humanitarian assistance and elicits international support for primary health care and life-saving hospital services. WHO and UNICEF supported a comprehensive survey on the health of the population and health service utilization. This established the first statistically reliable baseline data on key health-risk factors in the country, which will be useful in guiding the future development and reform of health care services and in monitoring trends in the population's health status over time. Critical interventions in the health sector included repairs to buildings, the supply of spare parts and materials for public health institutions, support to national public health programmes, including polio eradication and tuberculosis control, and initiatives of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

43. UNICEF continued to support the work of outreach medical teams providing basic medical services to refugee and displaced women and children. Essential equipment was provided to health-care centres to facilitate the establishment of emergency paediatric units. UNICEF also continued to deliver health education programmes focusing on infant feeding practices, immunization and visiting nurses. In Montenegro, particular emphasis was placed on educating displaced and local Roma mothers in breastfeeding, infant hygiene and child health care. In Serbia and Montenegro, the Breastfeeding Promotion and Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative was supported. UNICEF also published an extensive survey of households showing key health trends and indicators among women and children.

44. UNICEF distributed aid to southern Serbia in the form of basic drugs and equipment for health centres, hygiene supplies, vehicles and refrigerators for outreach immunization services, as well as clothing, footwear and school supplies for the area's most vulnerable children. In-service training of medical professionals was reinforced, ensuring the participation of all major ethnic groups.

45. UNHCR provided medical assistance to those refugees and internally displaced persons who could not be taken care of through the state health-care system. This included reimbursement of a portion of the costs incurred by specialized health institutions accommodating refugees, delivery of drugs to particularly vulnerable chronic cases and, on an exceptional basis, direct payments for prescriptions.

46. In Kosovo, WHO continued to provide technical assistance and health management training to the Department of Health and Social Welfare. March 2001 saw the beginning of the transfer of primary health care, including dentistry and drug regulation, from the Department to the province's municipal authorities. However, concerns remain over access to health facilities and the quality of health care for minorities. UNICEF, WHO and the Institute of Public Health have revitalized routine immunization services and prepared an Expanded Programme of Immunization Plan of Action 2000-2002. International agencies are building the capacity of all sections of the Department.

47. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) continued to support improvements in reproductive health information and services in Kosovo, including the rehabilitation of maternity units, provision of medical equipment and ensuring the availability of contraceptives. IOM continued to facilitate medical evacuation of Kosovars and to improve psychosocial services, school health education and awareness concerning the human immunodeficiency virus/ acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) in Kosovo. The UNAIDS Theme Group developed an HIV/AIDS prevention strategy for the province.

F. Water and sanitation

48. In Serbia, much humanitarian assistance in this area focused on the rehabilitation and upgrading of water supply and sewage systems in collective centres and private accommodation for refugees and the displaced. ICRC supported the Institute of Public Health in monitoring the quality of drinking water.

49. UNICEF focused on the improvement of drinking water supply and overall sanitary conditions of vulnerable populations in areas with large concentrations of refugees and displaced persons. UNICEF also supported the repair of sanitation facilities and laundry services in hospitals and maternity wards.

50. In Kosovo, water supply infrastructure continued to be a priority, with major leaks in the distribution network and illegal connections resulting in excessive loss of water and increased risk of contamination. The large concentrations of refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia put an added strain on water and sanitation systems. Low rates of payment of water bills limited the funding available for rehabilitation of the system. Management training of water company staff continued during the period under review.

51. UNICEF upgraded water and sanitation facilities in 75 schools and primary health-care units throughout Kosovo.

G. Education and child welfare

52. UNICEF placed high priority on the improvement of educational policies, teaching and learning methods and the curriculum, as well as rehabilitation of school buildings and provision of school equipment and teaching aids. Schools were supplied with furniture, teaching aids, textbooks, books for school libraries and student kits.

53. Particular attention was paid to the integration into the school system of displaced and refugee children, plus Roma and children with disabilities. In southern Serbia, local associations were supported in developing a project benefiting 700 children with disabilities. UNICEF also provided schools in the "active learning" network with audio-visual teaching aids and laboratory equipment. Some 1,000 teachers in Montenegro and some 3,000 in Serbia were trained in active learning methods, reaching 20,000 students.

54. UNICEF carried out a comprehensive evaluation of primary education that was used in planning for reform of the educational system.

55. Training programmes designed to develop sustainable non-formal education services for early child development were extended to 1,000 service providers, experts and policy makers. Some 20 community play centres were established and 20 kindergartens were equipped. Local kindergarten parent/teacher associations were established in Serbia, benefiting 20,000 pre-school children. In Montenegro, training was organized in 86 child-care centres.

56. Foster families were supported through donations in kind and by increasing the capacity of social services to assist them. Child-care institutions such as orphanages and those accommodating children with special needs were provided with basic hygiene items, clothing, footwear, bedding and mattresses.

57. In Kosovo, UNICEF has funded the reconstruction of 23 destroyed schools and is now focusing on support to the UNMIK Department of Education and Science, reform of the education system and the establishment of a network of pilot schools through which innovations will be introduced. A new, unified and gender- and ethnically-sensitive school curriculum is being developed. In cooperation with municipal authorities and non-governmental organizations, UNICEF supports education services for children from minority groups, especially Roma, facilitates the delivery of textbooks to all minority groups and works closely with the Department of Education and Science on early childhood development. UNICEF has also initiated special projects to enhance girls' access to continuing education and to promote women's literacy. However, the limited access of Serbian-speaking minorities to secondary education remains a matter of great concern.

H. Agriculture

58. FAO established an Emergency Coordination Office in Belgrade and participated in the United Nations inter-agency assessment mission to southern Serbia. Together with WFP, it also undertook a crop and food supply assessment mission in June 2001 that confirmed a rise in wheat plantings and yields since 2000. Severe levels of cattle destocking were identified among upland farmers with few alternative resources to procure winter fodder or generate income. In response, FAO distributed 3,500 tons of animal feed (maize grain and soya) to 16,200 owners of one or two cattle in the uplands of central Serbia. FAO provides technical assistance to agriculture policy makers through an inter-ministerial coordination task force.

59. During the autumn of 2000 and the spring of 2001, FAO seed and fertilizer distributions assisted 21,000 vulnerable families in Kosovo. The emergency farm reconstruction project supports vulnerable families and provides training and equipment for veterinarians. FAO supports efforts by the UNMIK Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development to rehabilitate and restructure the rural economy and fosters commercially oriented private farming. FAO is also strengthening the Department's forestry sector.

I. Promotion of durable solutions

60. A major focus of international humanitarian efforts in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is to seek durable solutions for the large refugee and displaced populations by promoting repatriation, resettlement and, as needed, local integration.

61. Repatriation continues to be actively pursued for refugees. UNHCR continued to play a role in the implementation of the protocol on organized return procedures between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia. Those activities met with only partial success, given the existing legal and practical problems in Croatia with regard to the repossession and reconstruction of refugees' property. Repatriation to Bosnia and Herzegovina was facilitated by the High Representative's initiatives to further repossess property. Efforts of various non-governmental organizations involved in the repatriation process were supported and public information activities continued to promote repatriation.

62. As regards protection, UNHCR and the authorities carried out joint refugee registrations in October 2000 in Montenegro and in March-April 2001 in Serbia, resulting in a total of 391,500 registered refugees (377,000 in Serbia and 14,500 in Montenegro). Updated registration figures of internally displaced persons show a total of 229,900. UNHCR, in cooperation with implementing partners, operates a legal counselling network for both refugees and internally displaced persons. Cross-border contacts between legal counselling offices in the countries of the region are being promoted. UNHCR also partially supports the office of the Commission for Real

Property Claims set up under the Dayton Agreement. Resettlement activities are being carried out, in cooperation with IOM, for a limited number of refugees (4,500 in 2001), but are expected to be scaled down in the years ahead.

63. The return of non-Albanian refugees and displaced persons from Kosovo to their homes remains one of the priorities. The situation of the internally displaced persons is closely monitored, including the Roma population, Serbs and Turks who are potentially vulnerable groups. Displaced persons from the locations identified in the Framework for Return are being contacted by UNHCR offices and informed about the plans being made with regard to return. A number of "go and see" visits to potential return locations in Kosovo were organized for internally displaced persons originating from those areas.

64. During the reporting period UNHCR streamlined the local settlement programme for refugees wishing to integrate locally and become self-reliant, thus limiting the dependency syndrome on humanitarian assistance. In the process concrete plans were made to improve and develop the income-generating programme into a microcredit one. Three non-governmental organizations were selected to continue implementing the programme and various policy and strategy changes were adopted. The permanent housing programme continued to be implemented, with a shift in focus to self-help activities and gradual phasing out of full construction, thus giving the beneficiaries full responsibility for the success of the programme. Further, during the first six months of 2001 a new pilot project was introduced to allow vulnerable refugees who were unable to build their own houses to benefit from the housing programme.

65. UNHCR bus lines for minorities in Kosovo were transferred to UNMIK on 1 July. However, inter-ethnic violence and the lack of freedom of movement continue to be key concerns for minorities, compromising their access to basic social services and institutionalizing their dependence on humanitarian assistance.

66. Municipal elections were held throughout Kosovo in October 2000. With greater jurisdiction being transferred to the municipalities, the activities of international agencies have focused increasingly on building the capacity of the municipalities.

67. To strengthen Kosovo's long-term absorption capacity for returnees, including ethnic minorities, IOM continued to rejuvenate the Kosovo labour market through training, as well as through support to employment-generating projects such as infrastructure improvements and maintenance.

J. Environmental damage

68. In Serbia, the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the United Nations Office for Project Services, is undertaking clean-up operations at a number of sites previously identified as environmental "hot spots" because of pollution levels that pose a threat to human health.

69. In August 2000, UNMIK closed the Trepca lead smelter in north Mitrovica owing to high levels of lead emissions. A team of consultants arrived to determine how the plant, and other Trepca plants in Kosovo, could be brought up to an environmentally acceptable standard.

70. Over the past year, the UNMIK Department of Environmental Protection and WHO independently investigated levels of depleted uranium in the province. The studies found that although there seemed to be no immediate risk to health, except to those who might directly inhale depleted uranium particles, it was not known if, over time, seepage of depleted uranium through the soil would contaminate the water table.

K. Mine action

71. UNICEF, together with ICRC, continued mine and unexploded ordnance awareness education programmes in schools in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (with particular focus on the area of southern Serbia along the administrative boundary with Kosovo). In Kosovo, mine and unexploded ordnance awareness education has been incorporated into the primary and secondary school curricula, while other risk reduction activities continue to target non-school-age elements of communities.

72. The Mine Action Coordination Centre in Pristina aims to ensure that all known minefields and cluster bomb munitions dropped by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Kosovo have been cleared by the end of 2001. To date, 14,712 anti-personnel mines, 5,473 anti-tank mines and 6,698 cluster bomb sub-munitions

have been cleared. Consequently the rate of incidents involving civilians has declined to an average of two incidents per month reported for the first six months of 2001. Strategy and supporting plans have been developed by the Centre to transfer responsibility for the longer-term aspects of mine action to UNMIK-created local government departments and institutions, from December 2001. While there will be a remaining residual threat in the future, it will be not unlike the current situation in many parts of Europe after the Second World War, with the response being dealt with by appropriately trained and structured local organizations.

L. Human rights

73. The promotion and protection of human rights is integral to the humanitarian effort throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concentrates on respect for the rule of law and administration of justice, minority rights and protection of detained persons. Following the democratic changes that began in October 2000, OHCHR also provides policy advice and technical support to the federal authorities, the Serbian Government, UNMIK in Kosovo and to relevant non-government organizations in order to ensure that key institutional reforms are informed by and compatible with relevant human rights norms.

74. UNHCR, UNICEF and ICRC also include human rights dimensions in their work. UNICEF provided support to awareness-raising campaigns on children's and women's rights and worked to encourage the participation of children and women in all spheres of life. Other activities included work on establishing an ombudsperson for children; promoting the rights of minority children, especially the Roma; and strengthening alliances with civil society, non-governmental organizations, community leaders and the media. UNICEF also helped 600 secondary school children, parents and representatives of the local media to increase coverage of child rights in the media and supported the publication of a textbook on child rights and international law.

75. In Kosovo, UNMIK promulgated regulations on domestic violence and trafficking. OHCHR has been pressing for new judicial, prison and police practices and institutions based on international human rights standards. Human rights standards have been integrated into the Kosovo Police Service training curriculum and all areas of police work. UNICEF focused on the reform of social services to improve the level of protection of the most vulnerable groups of women and children.

76. Nonetheless, ethnic violence continued, the worst examples being the killing of 4 Ashkalia returnees in November 2000 and the bus attack in February 2001 that left 11 Kosovo Serbs dead. In April 2001, ICRC published the second edition of the Book of the Missing, listing 3,525 missing persons from all communities in Kosovo. ICRC pursues the issue with the authorities in Belgrade, with UNMIK and Kosovo Albanian leaders.

VI. Assistance provided by Member States

77. Funding for humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is mobilized through the United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for South-Eastern Europe. Of the $167.9 million requested for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the 2000 appeal, $51.3 million was received, covering 30 per cent of requirements. For Kosovo-related programmes, $105 million was donated against a request for $267.6 million, covering 39 per cent of requirements.

78. As regards the 2001 appeal, of the $169 million requested for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, $30.9 million (or 18 per cent) had been received as at 20 June 2001. By the same date, of the $138.1 million requested for Kosovo, $20 million (or 14.5 per cent) had been donated. Owing to the relatively low response to the 2001 appeal, a number of projects, in particular in the areas of health, economic recovery and gender, had to be suspended or cancelled.

79. Many Member States provided assistance outside the framework of the consolidated appeal, through non-governmental organizations, regional organizations and initiatives and bilateral channels. Further information on funding of humanitarian programmes, including donations by individual Member States, can be obtained on the web at http://www.reliefweb.int.

VII. Concluding observations

80. During the period under review the domestic and international political context of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia changed dramatically, strengthening the prospects of making real progress in addressing the root causes of large-scale humanitarian needs. At the donors' conference co-hosted by the World Bank and the European Commission in Brussels on 29 June, the proposed programme for reform and development received strong support from donors.

81. The process of transition is expected to accelerate in the coming year. The humanitarian community's response has been to implement the development agenda by promoting policies and programmes that strengthen the national capacity to deliver basic services and meet subsistence needs, while advocating durable solutions for the displaced populations.

82. However, the process of development is unlikely to be linear and significant obstacles remain regarding durable solutions. In the short term, economic liberalization may result in increased unemployment and price inflation, while institutional reform may further disrupt public services such as health and education. At the donors' conference the World Bank confirmed that even with the best-case projections and recovery outlined in the economic recovery and transition programme, humanitarian assistance would continue to be a critical element of the social safety net in the near term.

83. Meeting the basic needs of vulnerable groups within the refugee, displaced and resident populations thus remains a priority for humanitarian agencies. Also of vital importance is the provision of transitional support to essential services such as health, education and social welfare in order to meet immediate needs, maintain services at minimum standards and strengthen the reform process.

84. Though political developments in Belgrade have enhanced prospects for stability, the situation remains volatile both internally and regionally. Regionally, the conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a destabilizing factor and has already generated displacement into Kosovo and Serbia proper. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also fragile. Humanitarian agencies, therefore, need to maintain sufficient monitoring and emergency response capacity throughout the region for the foreseeable future.

85. While the overall situation in Kosovo has continued to improve over the past year, the difficulties facing minority populations remain a concern. Although improvements have been made in services and infrastructure, both are overstretched in areas with large concentrations of refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The transition from humanitarian assistance to development and from international to autonomous provincial and local administration is progressing, but is hampered in some cases by a lack of capacity, as well as increasing levels of corruption and nepotism.

Notes

[1] Excluding Kosovo.

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Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Security Council
Fifth-sixth year

Letter dated 12 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure of enclosing the press communiqué of the eightieth session of the Ministerial Council of the Cooperation Council for the Gulf Arab States, held at Jeddah on 7 and 8 September 2001 (see annex).

I would appreciate your issuing the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under items 53, 65 and 109 of the provisional agenda, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jassim M. **Buallay**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/56/150.

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Annex to the letter 12 September 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Press Communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its eightieth session, held at Jeddah on 7 and 8 September 2001

On 7 and 8 September 2001, the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its eightieth session at Jeddah under the chairmanship of His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain and Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister responsible for Foreign Affairs of Oman;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar;

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait;

His Excellency Sheikh Jamil Ibrahim Al-Hujeilan, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting;

The Ministerial Council considered the agreement to establish the joint high commission for cooperation between Bahrain and Kuwait and the agreement on diplomatic and consular cooperation between the two countries, signed in Kuwait on 3 September 2001. The Council welcomed and commended these two agreements as representing a laudable and important step which would enhance and promote the progress of joint action by the GCC countries and which accorded with the supreme goals of the Council.

Within the framework of the follow-up and promotion of joint action aimed at the realization of the intentions of the leaders of the GCC countries and the aspirations of their peoples and with a view to promoting security and stability in the region, the Ministerial Council reviewed the outcome of the meetings of a number of ministerial committees and major regional, Arab and international political events and issues.

Cooperation

With regard to economic affairs, the Council reviewed the outcome of the tenth meeting of the ministerial committee on planning and development and the committee's recommendations and decisions. These related to the unification of deadlines for the holding of general censuses, with a view to the provision of expenses; the strengthening of complementary policies relating to population and development planning; and the adoption of an appropriate mechanism for the

formulation of a population policy in conjunction with the plans and programmes of action for the implementation of the goals set forth in the general framework for the population strategy for the GCC countries within a specific time frame. The committee's recommendations also concerned the question of preparing the economies of the GCC countries to adjust to new local, regional and international economic and social developments and the question of the applications of "electronic government", meaning utilization of Internet communications to provide government services to citizens more easily and at lower cost in response to ongoing developments in the technological and information fields.

The Council also considered the outcome of the sixth meeting of ministers concerned with municipal affairs and the decisions arrived at by them with regard to the strengthening and promotion of cooperation between the GCC countries in the following fields: comprehensive strategic architectural planning; the urban environment; the training of national cadres; the monitoring of foodstuffs; stimulation of municipal consultations; participation of the private sector in the financing of municipal projects; preservation of the Gulf architectural heritage; and the establishment of a municipal database for the GCC countries.

In the field of man and the environment, the Ministerial Council reviewed the outcome of the tenth meeting of ministers responsible for culture in the GCC countries. These included the establishment of the prize for creativity offered by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, the establishment of joint cultural programmes and activities, issues relating to the protection of copyright and intellectual property rights, establishment of a book week, promotion of book publishing and the expansion of book circulation in the GCC countries.

The Council considered the progress made in military cooperation among those States and the steps successfully taken and expressed its aspiration for continued achievement in this field.

The Ministerial Council held a special meeting at which it met with the Chairman of the Advisory Board and a number of the Board's members to consider the views arrived at by the Advisory Board of the Supreme Council at the second meeting of its fourth session, held in Bahrain on 12 and 13 June 2001 in implementation of the decision of the Supreme Council at its twenty-first session to request the Advisory Council to study the topics of education and the development of the educational system; energy and the environment; water strategies; and scientific and technical research. The Ministerial Council decided to continue its study of these views in preparation for referring them to the Supreme Council.

Political issues

The Ministerial Council discussed developments in the context of Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and the consequences of its occupation of Kuwait.

The Council reiterated its strong condemnation and denunciation of the Iraqi political message that had been voiced by a number of senior Iraqi officials and Iraq's arrogance towards and intimidation of its neighbours. It urged the Iraqi Government to desist from such irresponsible statements and to demonstrate its good faith in both word and deed.

In its concern to create appropriate conditions for the achievement and consolidation of security, peace and stability in the Gulf region, the Council renewed its call to Iraq to discharge in full its obligations under the Security Council resolutions relating to cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations high-level coordinator and the Tripartite Commission in devising an expeditious and definitive solution to the problem of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees and the return of all Kuwaiti property in its possession. The Ministerial Council also urged Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations in bringing the outstanding issues relating to weapons of mass destruction and monitoring systems to a satisfactory conclusion.

The Council called upon Iraq and the Security Council to engage in an exhaustive dialogue with a view to the discharge of these obligations in a just and comprehensive manner and in accordance with sound principles as a step towards the lifting of sanctions.

The Council stressed that Iraq must undertake to respect the security, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait and that it must take all necessary steps to demonstrate its peaceful intentions towards the GCC countries if the region's security and stability are to be assured.

The Council called upon Iraq to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions with a view to ending the suffering of the Iraqi people, and it once again affirmed that it continued to welcome and to be prepared to participate in all humanitarian initiatives to mitigate that suffering.

The Council again affirmed its consistent position that the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected and that there must be no interference in its internal affairs.

The Ministerial Council further pursued the mandate entrusted to it by the Supreme Council to examine all available peaceful means that might be conducive to the restoration to the United Arab Emirates of its legitimate rights in its three islands, namely, The Greater Tunb, The Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, that are still being occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Council welcomed the visit made by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan Bin Zayed, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates to Tehran on 23 July 2001 and the visit of Mr. Muhammad Ali Abtahi, the envoy of the Iranian President, Mr. Muhammad Khatami, to Abu Dhabi on 3 August 2001. It expressed its hope that those visits would pave the way for efforts to devise a solution to the issue of the three islands.

The Council expressed its full support for all the steps being taken by the United Arab Emirates to restore its sovereignty over its three islands by peaceful means, in accordance with the principle of the collective security of the GCC countries.

The Council reaffirmed its unconditional support for the claim of the United Arab Emirates to the three islands occupied by the Islamic Republic of Iran, namely, The Greater Tunb, The Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa. It affirms the full sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands as an integral part of the country, the fact that it retains all of its rights in respect of those islands, and the Council's non-recognition of any sovereignty other than that of the United Arab Emirates over

its three islands, their territorial waters, their air space and the related continental shelf and exclusive economic zone.

The Ministerial Council considered with extreme concern the grave deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestine territories as a result of the racist attacks being launched by Israel, the barbaric practices against the struggling Palestinian people, the continuation of the policy of blockade, starvation, intimidation and the assassination of political figures of key importance for the Palestinian people, and the action taken by the occupation forces in the morning of Friday, 10 August 2001, to occupy Orient House, which represents a symbol of Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem, thus causing the situation in the region to go from bad to worse because of the Israeli violence against the Palestinian people.

The Ministerial Council holds Israel fully responsible for the grave deterioration of the situation as a result of the policy of aggression and intimidation and Israel's retraction from signed agreements and flight from its responsibilities with regard to the peace process. The Council confirmed that the Arab and Islamic worlds had been waiting with the utmost patience for Israel to change this policy. However, Israel had pushed its aggression beyond all measure, and the time had come for Israel to shoulder its responsibility. The Council expressed its consternation at the fact that the international community, in particular, the United States of America, the primary sponsor of the peace process, had turned a blind eye to Israel's aggressive practices and the illegal measures that Israel was unceasingly carrying out against the Palestinian people. The Council called upon the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to prevail upon it to face up to its responsibility vis-à-vis the peace process.

The Ministerial Council condemned these racist Israeli practices and warned that the deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories would inevitably lead to the collapse of peace and security in the region as a whole. It held the Israeli Government wholly responsible for the destruction of the peace process. The Council called for immediate intervention by the Security Council, by the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, and by the European Union and Member States to put a halt to the barbaric Israeli acts of aggression to which the Palestinian people is being subjected, to provide international protection for it and to put an end to the occupation of all Arab and Palestinian territories.

The Council reaffirmed the illegality of the Israeli settlements and reiterated that they constitute a fundamental threat to security and prevent its establishment and that the current wave of violence is basically due to the continuance of Israeli occupation and Israeli rejection of the agreements and commitments signed by the two parties on the basis and principles of the Madrid Peace process and the resolutions that embody international legitimacy and Israeli violations of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Council believes that placing obligations on the Palestinian party without any corresponding obligation on the Israeli party constitutes injustice and a perversion of standards and that calm and a halt to the violence will thus not be achieved. The Council reaffirmed the need for an effective international observer presence in the areas of tension.

The Council condemned the policy of escalation and the provocation and expansion of the scope of the violence being pursued by the Israeli Government vis-

à-vis the neighbouring countries, which is bringing the region near to explosion point and threatening its security and stability.

The Council reaffirmed the support of the GCC countries for Syria's firm position of principle calling for full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights to the line of 4 June 1967, in accordance with the Madrid provisions and the principle of land for peace, for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), for the resumption of negotiations between the two sides from where they left off and for placing on Israel the responsibility for the breakdown of progress on this track. It reaffirmed the continued support of the GCC countries for the Lebanese position calling for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and Israel's withdrawal from the Shab'a farmlands. It continues to call upon the international community to take all measures to prevail upon Israel to release immediately all Lebanese prisoners and abductees detained in Israeli prisons and other places of detention in contravention of the provisions of international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the 1907 Convention of The Hague.

The Council again calls upon the international community to take action to transform the Middle East region, including the Gulf, into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The Council affirms once more that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime.

The Ministerial Council welcomes His Excellency Mr. Hamad Ahmad al-Amir as he takes up his new post as head of the Mission of the GCC countries in Brussels, as of April 2002, and wishes him long-lasting success.